

**FY2008 IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE, EMS BUREAU, AND
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE
INTEROPERABILITY GRANT PROGRAM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Tell me about this grant program.

- This program is federally funded and designed to assist local agencies in becoming P-25 compliant with their communication equipment. Available funds total approximately \$360,000.
- This program will assist EMS agencies in the acquisition of interoperable communications, equipment, software and systems that:
 - Conform to your agency's county interoperability communications plan,
 - Enable interoperability with communications systems that can utilize reallocated public safety spectrum for communication, or
 - Otherwise improve or advance the interoperability of public safety communications systems that utilize other public safety spectrum bands.

What is 700 MHz?

The single most important element to achieving 100% interoperability among public safety agencies is to have everyone operating in a single band of spectrum. For the first time, the FCC has allocated radio spectrum specifically with public safety in mind. A popular choice for public safety responder radio communications in the state of Idaho has been the 700 MHz spectrum. This band (700 MHz) is clear radio spectrum with no possibility of interference being encountered due to outside sources. In contrast, the 800 MHz band has numerous opportunities for interference being generated due to the nature of interspersed public safety and commercial uses. Additionally, the 700 MHz spectrum is easy to migrate to, enables both data and voice communications, and does not impede current operations during the transition.

When will StateComm be compatible with 700 MHz?

StateComm's dispatch consoles will be connected to the 700 MHz Master site on April 23, 2008. At that point StateComm will be able to communicate with agencies operating in the 700 MHz frequency range. StateComm will be able to "patch" together agencies that are not operating in the 700 MHz range with agencies that have transitioned to 700 MHz.

Will EMS F1 and F2 still exist?

Absolutely! EMS F1 (155.340) and F2 (155.280) will continue to be available and used by StateComm and EMS agencies and will still be monitored by StateComm 24/7.

What is P25?

P25 stands for Project 25 and is a standard for the manufacturing of interoperable digital two-way wireless communications products. The P25 standard was created by and for public safety professionals.

Who is eligible to apply?

EMS Bureau FY08 Interoperability Grant FAQ

- Agencies located in counties with their County/Tribal Interoperability Emergency Communication Plan approved by the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) by May 30, 2008.
- Nonprofit or governmental agencies that hold a current EMS license issued by the state of Idaho may apply for the FY2008 Interoperability Grant Program.
- Nonprofit agencies must be currently registered with the Idaho Secretary of State and this will be verified by the Bureau. A copy of your current registration document would be helpful.
- Only one application will be accepted from each eligible licensed EMS agency.

How do I know if my county has a County/Tribal Interoperability Emergency Communication Plan approved by the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) plan?

- Contact your County Emergency Manager to determine if there is an approved plan in place.
- The County Emergency Manager may contact the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) to determine if the plan has been approved.

What may I apply for?

- Applicants may apply for full funding of P-25 compliant vehicle-mounted radios, handheld portable radios, and base stations or upgrades to existing base stations, FCC licenses, antenna, and repeaters.
- Requested communication equipment must be P-25 compliant.

When is the application due?

Completed applications will be eligible for consideration only if postmarked, hand delivered, or faxed to the EMS Bureau Central Office no later than 5 pm MST, May 30, 2008.

LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS SHALL BE EXCLUDED FROM CONSIDERATION FOR AN AWARD.

How will I ensure the Bureau has received my application?

- A “Receipt of Mailing” or EMS Bureau “Receipt Acknowledgement” should be retained until the EMS Bureau Central Office has confirmed receipt of application.
- This confirmation is shown on the EMS Bureau web-site: www.idahoems.org. The section for Interoperability Grants has a table for Interoperability Grant Applications showing the agency license number, agency name, and the date the application was received at the Bureau’s Central Office.

Example: 4444 Boise Ambulance 5/20/08

What needs to be turned in?

Completed FY2008 Application and any applicable attachments as listed on *FY08 Interoperability Grant Application*, page 3.

Applicable attachments and information are required for the application to be considered complete.

What information is required on the application?

The “Agency Information” section of the application instructions provides detailed instructions regarding the information requested on the application. Please fill in all requested information as accurately as possible. Each answer you provide will contribute information to a predetermined data point system that will assess your overall score. Inaccurate or incomplete information could result in a lower score or even

loss of grant consideration. The required information is listed on “FY2008 Interoperability Grant Application”, page 3.

What if my agency does not want to apply?

The Application Declination and Yielding of Authority for Application letter must be completed and returned to the EMS Bureau by May 30, 2008. The County Emergency Manager may be yielded the authority by your agency to apply on your behalf. Be sure to notify your County Emergency Manager of this. The County Emergency Manager may complete an application for your agency, not to be combined with any other agencies, and will be due to the EMS Bureau no later than May 30, 2008.

Who receives the award funds if the County Emergency Manager applies on behalf of my agency?

Your agency will receive the funds and be responsible for purchasing the awarded equipment.

What if I have questions?

Please read the guidance document, entire application and the instructions. You may contact your county emergency manager for assistance with the County/Tribal Interoperability Emergency Communication Plan approved by the Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) plan. You may also contact your EMS Bureau Regional Consultant or, if time is urgent, telephone the EMS Bureau Central Office at (208) 334-4000 for assistance with the grant application.

North (Lewiston Office) 208/799-4390

South (Boise Office) 208/334-4633

East (Idaho Falls Office) 208/525-7047

What are the timelines involved to participate in this program?

- County/Tribal Interoperability Emergency Communication Plan approved by the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) no later than May 30, 2008.
- Applications are due to the EMS Bureau no later than May 30, 2008.
- Applications will be reviewed by the Bureau for completeness and then scored for determination of awards by June 16, 2008.
- Bureau will send notifications of awards or non-awards to applicants by July 1, 2008.
- Agency sends copy of “Vendor Purchase Order” or other documentation showing equipment order has been placed, along with the cost of the item(s) to the EMS Bureau no later than August 1, 2008.
- Funds will be distributed to grant recipients on or about August 11, 2008.
- Unused funds will be due to the Bureau no later than October 10, 2008.
- Documentation showing the actual purchase Invoice and proof of payment by the agency will be due to the Bureau no later than November 10, 2008.